

Opening Statement
The Honorable Ralph Hall (R-TX)
Ranking Member, Committee on Science and Technology
The Benefits and Challenges of Producing Liquid Fuel from Coal: The Role for Federal Research

September 4, 2007

Thank you Chairman Lampson. I would like to thank you for having this very important hearing today. I have stated many times that coal is an important part of our domestic energy mix and that it should continue to be so through broadened use – in particular, coal-to-liquids.

One of our witnesses, Dr. Bartis, states in his testimony that, “OPEC revenues from oil exports are about \$700 billion a year.” \$700 billion a year. We are handing countries like Venezuela, Iran, Libya, and Saudi Arabia hundreds of *billions* of dollars a year. Why? Because unfortunately, there are those in this country that feel it is better to give \$700 billion dollars to unstable foreign governments than it is to invest in our own country, our own work force, our national security and our energy independence.

So today we’re talking about coal-to-liquids technology, of which I have been supportive in this and previous Congresses. Just this year alone, Republicans have attempted, several times, to include common sense language to bills that have passed through this committee and on the House floor. Language that is in fact supported by some of our witnesses’s testimony, but all of which was ultimately defeated by the majority. I know that we have to worry not only about our energy supply, but also the effects of energy exploration, production and consumption on our environment. I have faith in our scientists and inventors that they will devise ways to increasingly reduce emissions from the energy life-cycle of fossil fuels. If we can invent ways for humans to live in space, we can continue to improve the capture and sequestration of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases.

I’ve said it before – we need it all. We need renewable energy and plug-in hybrids, but we also need clean coal technology, nuclear power and environmentally responsible exploration and drilling for oil and natural gas on American soil and in American waters. While we continue R&D into renewable fuels and alternative vehicles, we still need fossil fuels in order to maintain the lifestyle that we Americans deserve and that makes the United States of America the greatest country in the world.